

CYCLIC ELEMENTS IN SCHUBERT'S LAST THREE PIANO SONATAS,  
D. 958, 959, AND 960

by

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Submitted to the faculty of the  
Jacobs School of Music in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree,  
Doctor of Music  
Indiana University  
December 2016

Accepted by the faculty of the  
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Music

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September 6, 2016

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*To my family*

*with love*

*사랑하는 가족에게 이 논문을 바칩니다*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to my advisor, Professor Shigeo Neriki for the tremendous support during my Doctor of Music study and performance. Over nine years of study, you truly helped me grow as a mature pianist and artist, and I sincerely thank you for giving me such encouragement and inspiration.

I would like to thank Professor André Watts for being a research director and committee chair in spite of demanding schedules and for advising the Piano Essay and guiding recitals.

I would like to thank Professor Jean-Louis Haguenauer for allowing me an opportunity to play in the masterclass and for giving comments.

Lastly I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Ms. Yong Hi Moon at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University who always has been my inspiration, constantly drives my musical endeavors, and has faith in me. Thank you very much for showing me how to be the pianist and instructor I strive to be.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Examples .....	viii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Chapter II: Analysis on the Last Three Piano Sonatas with Motivic Elements.....	3
1. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958.....	3
A. Emphasis on A-flat.....	3
B. Emphasis on D-flat.....	9
C. Rhythmic and Melodic Motives.....	16
2. Sonata in A Major, D. 959.....	22
A. Key of C Major.....	22
B. Key of C# Minor.....	28
C. Melodic Motives.....	36
3. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 906.....	42
A. G-flat.....	42
B. Harmonic and Melodic Motives.....	43
Chapter III: Cyclic Elements in the Three Sonatas.....	47
1. Diminished Fifth Melodies.....	49
2. Chromatic Motives, Four-Note Cell, F#–G–A flat–G.....	56
3. C#–B#–E Motive.....	64
4. Chromatic Scale from E.....	66
5. Parallel Imperfect Thirds/Sixths.....	70

6. A-flat.....	77
7. Rhythmic Motive.....	78
8. Others.....	82
Chapter IV: Conclusion.....	83
Bibliography.....	86

## List of Examples

Example 1. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 1–20.....	4
Example 2. Beethoven 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80. mm. 1–8.....	5
Example 3. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 95–105.....	6
Example 4. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 1–12.....	8
Example 5. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 19–27.....	8
Example 6. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 28–42.....	8
Example 7. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 409–413.....	9
Example 8. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 44–50.....	10
Example 9. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 137–145.....	11
Example 10. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 162–178.....	11
Example 11. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 7–16.....	12
Example 12. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 102–107.....	13
Example 13. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 17–24.....	13
Example 14. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 23–35.....	14
Example 15. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 49–62.....	15
Example 16. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 93–112.....	16
Example 17. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 37–43.....	17
Example 18. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 243–248.....	17
Example 19. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 12–16.....	18
Example 20. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 50–59.....	18
Example 21. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 102–107.....	18



Example 22. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 28–41.....	19
Example 23. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 105–112.....	20
Example 24. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 232–242.....	20
Example 25. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 423–429.....	21
Example 26. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 27–31.....	23
Example 27. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 82–86.....	23
Example 28. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 129–168.....	24
Example 29. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 260–276.....	26
Example 30. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 17–44.....	27
Example 31. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 90–106.....	28
Example 32. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 105–15.....	30
Example 33. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 31–53.....	32
Example 34. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 139–211.....	33
Example 35. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 65–81.....	37
Example 36. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 195–202.....	38
Example 37. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 77–101.....	39
Example 38. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 365–382.....	45
Example 39. Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 1–20.....	45
Example 40. Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 82–98.....	46
Example 41. Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 103–106.....	46
Example 42. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 13–15.....	49
Example 43. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 37–43.....	50
Example 44. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–6.....	50

Example 45. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 17–31.....	51
Example 46. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–10.....	52
Example 47. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 1–5.....	52
Example 48. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 36–39.....	53
Example 49. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 36–39.....	54
Example 50. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 54–68.....	54
Example 51. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 21–36.....	55
Example 52. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 25–26.....	56
Example 53. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 118–161.....	57
Example 54. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 249–257.....	59
Example 55. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 41–48.....	60
Example 56. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 184–186.....	60
Example 57. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 77–85.....	61
Example 58. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 1–16.....	61
Example 59. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 200–203.....	62
Example 60. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 278–316.....	63
Example 61. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 17–20.....	64
Example 62. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 128–139.....	65
Example 63. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 118–119.....	65
Example 64. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 6–10.....	65
Example 65. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 141–156.....	67
Example 66. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 7–15.....	68
Example 67. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 27–29.....	68

Example 68. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 157–164.....	69
Example 69. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 1–6.....	70
Example 70. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 1–23.....	71
Example 71. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 1–6, simplified version....	72
Example 72. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 53–58.....	73
Example 73. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1 <sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 314–321.....	73
Example 74. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2 <sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–8.....	73
Example 75. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 77–83.....	73
Example 76. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 77–83.....	74
Example 77. Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 77–83.....	75
Example 78. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 305–352.....	76
Example 79. Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 1–4.....	78
Example 80. Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 4 <sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 158–215.....	79

## Chapter I: Introduction

Unlike his predecessors, Mozart and Beethoven, in the Viennese Classical tradition, Franz Schubert, as a great writer of songs, had long struggled writing instrumental sonatas. For instance, during his early period (1815-19) he began composing fifteen piano sonatas, eleven of which he left unfinished.<sup>1</sup> Schubert intermittently returned to this genre throughout his career.<sup>2</sup> In the year of 1828—his death year—Schubert triumphantly returned to the piano sonata, composing three in only a few months. These last three sonatas (D. 958, 959, and 960)<sup>3</sup> have been frequently compared to Ludwig van Beethoven's late piano sonatas (1826-23), largely due to his significant influence on Schubert.<sup>4</sup> However, Schubert's sonatas differ from Beethoven's in several significant aspects: the number of movements, the reliance on more traditional classical forms, and their length and expressive scope. Yet one significant trait shared by Schubert and Beethoven's sonatas has been consistently overlooked by music critics.

Prominent concert pianists such as Alfred Brendel and Mitsuko Uchida have noted that Beethoven's last three piano sonatas have shared motivic elements which make these sonatas a unified whole comprising a three-sonata cycle.<sup>5</sup> Schubert's last three sonatas are also unified through a similar technique. But his use of motivic features, which interrelate the sonatas by

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<sup>1</sup> The exact number of Schubert's Piano Sonatas cannot be ascertained because of unfinished sonatas.

<sup>2</sup> Eva Badura-Skoda discusses in her essay that Schubert's Piano Sonatas can be grouped in three by period; first group (1815-1819), second group (1823-1826), but preceded in 1822 by Wanderer Fantasy, and the last group in 1828. Eva Badura-Skoda, "The Piano Works of Schubert," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer Books, 2004), 97–146.

<sup>3</sup> John Reed talks points out that the autographs of these last three sonatas are headed 'Sonata I,' 'Sonata II' and 'Sonata III.' John Reed, *Schubert, The Master Musicians Series*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London and Melbourne: J. M Dent & Sons Ltd, 1987), 203.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts of the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 181.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Brendel argues in his essay that Beethoven's Piano Sonatas, Op. 109, 110 and 111 have the thematic fundamentals which are "the space of six adjacent diatonic notes (a hexachord) and the intervals of a third and a fourth which subdivide it. Whether the motifs rise or fall within the sixth remains important throughout the piece." Alfred Brendel, "Beethoven's New Style," in *Alfred Brendel On Music: Collected Essays* (London: Robinsin Books, 2007), 86–87. Mitsuko Uchida, Program note to Ludwig v. Beethoven, *Piano Sonatas: Op. 109, 110 & 111*, performed by Mitsuko Uchida, piano, Phillips, 000637902, 2006, CD.

structural, harmonic, melodic and intervallic elements, is quite subtle and may escape the attention of casual listeners. In this essay, I will demonstrate ways in which Schubert's last three sonatas, like Beethoven's, form a multi-work cycle through these shared motivic elements.

## **Chapter II: Analysis of the Last Three Piano Sonatas with Motivic Elements**

Not only do Schubert's last three piano sonatas form a multi-work cycle, each individual sonata is cyclically unified in itself through interconnected motivic elements and tonal relationships.

### **1. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958**

#### **A. Emphasis on A-flat**

Schubert unifies the four movements of Sonata in C Minor (D. 958) into a tightly-woven cycle through shared harmonic, thematic, and motivic elements. One of the most prominent unifying features of Sonata in C Minor is an emphasis on the note and chord A-flat. This pitch and chord appear frequently in intense musical moments, where they lie in the dynamic and registral extremes of Schubert's piano. In the opening phrase, Schubert introduces this use of A-flat to the listener, by placing it at the moment of melodic climax in m. 7 (Example 1). But this initial phrase quickly dies away and is soon answered by a higher second phrase beginning in m. 9 that progresses to the melodic apex of the entire piece: a melodic A-flat[7] in m. 12. This moment is remarkable in a number of ways. The register is high the dynamic indication a loud *ff*, and with its arrival comes a surprising jolt of great harmonic energy that heralds a sudden and extreme change in texture, most noticeably seen in the change of rhythm and quick descending scalar passages that take the right hand to an extremely low A-flat[4] by m. 14. This A-flat not only acts as melodic note, but also appears part of the harmony, where it lasts as a pedal (sort of) until m. 19.

Example 1. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 1–20

The musical score for the first movement of Schubert's Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, measures 1-20. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The key signature is C minor (three flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score is written for piano. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a melody in measure 1, marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as ornaments, slurs, and dynamics like 'cresc.' and 'ff'. The measures are numbered 1 through 20, with a repeat sign at the end of measure 20.

This opening phrase with the A-flat apex also alludes to Beethoven's 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80 in Example 2. Not only does Sonata in C Minor share the same key as Beethoven's 32 Variations, but it begins with the fullest and most explicit quotation of Beethoven in all of Schubert's instrumental music.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 203.

The harmonic progression at the beginning of both works is the same and the melody in Schubert's sonata is taken almost note-for-note from the melodic line of Beethoven's 32 Variations: the rising C–D–E–F–F#–G–A flat.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Schubert emphasizes the arrival of E-natural in m. 3 in an ascending scale and postpones the traditional V-I progression by adding a surprising VI with A-flat in the highest voice in m. 12 before cadencing much like Beethoven, as seen in Example 1. However, Example 1 highlights several differences between Schubert's Sonata in C Minor and Beethoven's variations: the theme begins in a low register, climbs up to the high A-flat, and keeps the C pedal tone in the bass for the first half of the phrase whereas Beethoven uses a traditional chaconne chromatic bass line. Schubert's theme is repeated in m. 21, quickly turns to the major mode by m. 27, and introduces a second theme in the traditional key of dominant (E-flat major) in m. 40.

Example 2. Beethoven 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80. mm. 1–8



In fact, many appearances of the A-flat sonorities are connected through musical extremes: ranges and dynamics. The next A-flat chord appears in the beginning of the development in m. 99 (Example 3). The development begins suddenly with the loud A-flat chord in *ffz* as deceptive resolution of V in C minor from the previous measure at the double bar. In four measures of the A-flat pedal phrase (mm. 99–103) A-flat appears in a contrasting lower register compared to its first appearance in m. 12. Here there are extreme and sudden dynamic changes

<sup>2</sup> Edward Cone, "Schubert's Beethoven," *The Musical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (October, 1970): 780.



Example 3. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 95–105.

95

*dimin.*

*f*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

102

*ff*

*p*

*cresc.*

*f*

The role of the A-flat in the compound ternary *Menuetto* summarizes the relationship vis-a-vis A-flat between the first and second movements. In the *Menuetto*, A-flat is presented four times with dramatic musical features as seen in the first movement. Similar to the opening phrase of the first movement, Schubert briefly introduces the first A-flat in an ascending melodic line in

m. 2 as a pinching upper neighboring tone, but its sonority quickly dies away as the melodic line continues upwards and abandons A-flat in m. 4 by replacing A natural, as shown in Example 4. Immediately Schubert moves towards A-flat major, first by introducing a melodic D-flat in m. 5, and then confirming it with an accented A-flat major chord in m. 8. This patch of A-flat is filled with intense musical elements. Schubert marks *crescendo* in m. 5 culminating with a *f* in m. 8, and the melodic line rises continuously from m. 4. Another interesting feature of this opening phrase is the irregular phrase structure. It begins with a three-bar unit, then changes to a two-bar unit in mm. 4–7. However Schubert emphasizes this A-flat melodic apex in strong single-bar phrases for two measures (mm. 8–9) along with a sudden dynamic change from *f* to *p* in m. 9. More obviously, A-flat in mm. 21–26 (Example 5) returns during the middle section of the *Menuetto* and overtakes the music both tonally and rhythmically.<sup>3</sup> Schubert pulls the music away from C minor and wrenches it to A-flat major, starting rhythmically in a weak position in m. 22. After two measures of hammering A-flat, the melody leaps to D-flat in m. 24 with *fz*, which “confirms the association of this passage with the first dramatic appearance of A-flat major in the first movement.”<sup>4</sup> The last occurrence of the A-flat appears in mm. 33–34 (Example 6) through a brief A-flat major scale in the right hand. In contrast with the first two A-flat appearances, this A-flat sounds with great intensity at the softest dynamic level of the movement (*pp*). This is the first place in the movement with inverted counterpoint between the two hands and the phrase begins hypermetrically on a weak measure following a grand pause. The Trio, expressing more dance-like movement caused by the absence of the hemiolas that dominate the *Menuetto*, shares not only the key but also the calm and tranquil atmosphere of the second movement.

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<sup>3</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 195.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Example 4. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 1–12

Menuetto  
Allegro

The musical score for Example 4 is a minuet in C minor, D. 958, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, measures 1–12. It is in 3/4 time and marked 'Menuetto Allegro'. The score begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A crescendo (*cresc.*) is indicated over measures 5–7, leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a first and second ending. Fingerings and slurs are clearly marked throughout the score.

Example 5. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 19–27

The musical score for Example 5 continues from the previous example, showing measures 19–27. It features a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, and then a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piece includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

Example 6. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 28–42

The musical score for Example 6 continues from the previous example, showing measures 28–42. It features a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic, followed by a forte (*f*) dynamic, and then a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piece includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

In the last movement, the climax of the development has a prominent A-flat in m. 410 (Example 7). The extreme range of the A-flat between two hands recalls the first A-flat in the opening phrase of the first movement. Schubert reaches this A-flat with contrary motion between the hands: ascending in the right hand and descending octaves in the left. Harmonically, the A-flat resolves in m. 413 to a dominant pedal tone in C minor, similar to its corresponding place in the first movement (m. 19) where A-flat also progresses to a dominant pedal. Yet here in the last movement, Schubert repeats this A-flat once more in mm. 421–424 before its final resolution.

Example 7. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 409–413



## B. Emphasis on D-flat

Though it is a less dramatic apex than the A-flat discussed above, D-flat major is also a significant key/sonority in the sonata. Throughout each of the sonata's movements, Schubert frequently and unexpectedly modulates to D-flat major, which is related to the work's tonic by an unusual and distant minor second, with various and rich musical elements. In the first movement, Schubert presents the first D-flat in a texture of string quartet or chorale-like second theme in mm. 48–50 (Example 8), where the dynamic suddenly drops to *pp* from two measures of *crescendo*. He reaches this D-flat major sonority by contrary motion: half step up in alto and whole step down in bass. This moment, actually in the key of G-flat major, emphasizes D-flat as a repeated pedal tone in the bass. The phrase then repeats itself with a more pianistic texture:

broken chords in triplets as an accompaniment and a melody doubled in octave. Schubert once again modulates to D-flat major in the climax of the development in m. 138 (Example 9). The climax of the development is rather placid and tranquil. And even though it appears at a whispering *pp* that starkly contrasts with the strong dynamics of the rest of the movement, this passage is endowed with a great intensity caused by presenting the first moment of extreme chromaticism in the movement: a descending chromatic scale in the right hand and a semitonal melody in the left. Schubert continues this highly chromatic musical material with an emphasis on D-flat major through mm. 142–144. This D-flat, functioning as an upper-leading tone to C, soon steps down to C major in m. 145 as a way of preparing the return to the recapitulation. The recapitulation has passing D-flat major chords in m. 165 and m. 178 (Example 10). Unlike the opening phrase of the movement, Schubert extends the same phrase in the recapitulation by having short developmental passages with D-flat major chords. When the D-flat major chord appears for a second time m. 178, the music finally diverges from the opening theme. In this case, short descending arpeggios replace scalar passagework, now culminating on a dominant pedal of a bridge-like passage instead of repeating a theme in the tonic.

Example 8. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 44–50



Example 9. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 137–145

This musical score excerpt covers measures 137 to 145. It is written for piano in C minor (three flats). The key signature is C minor. The time signature is 4/4. The score is in two systems. The first system contains measures 137 and 138. Measure 137 features a piano (p) dynamic. The second system contains measures 139, 140, and 141. Measure 140 features a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The third system contains measures 142, 143, and 144. Measure 143 features a decrescendo (decresc.) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings.

Example 10. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 162–178

This musical score excerpt covers measures 162 to 178. It is written for piano in C minor (three flats). The key signature is C minor. The time signature is 4/4. The score is in three systems. The first system contains measures 162 and 163. Measure 162 features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The second system contains measures 164, 165, and 166. Measure 164 features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The third system contains measures 167, 168, and 169. Measure 167 features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings.

In the second movement, the D-flat chord is displayed in plagal cadences three times with indication of *crescendo* to vi and *decrescendo* to I, but each of these is in a different registral position. After eight measures of the opening phrase, the theme repeats in an even softer dynamic (*pp*) in the middle C range by moving up the bass an octave higher. The theme soon modulates to D-flat major in m. 11 (Example 11) and closes with a four-measure phrase in D-flat major with a plagal cadence (a G-flat minor chord (iv) falls to a D-flat major chord (I)), extended with a *fermata* on the last chord. This same harmonic progression returns in mm. 53–54 with a wider range and thicker texture than in its first appearance. In the final A section in m. 102 (Example 12), Schubert writes a series of plagal cadence in different keys: C major, D-flat major and D major. After the first C major plagal cadence in m. 105, he jumps up to a higher range in closed position in m. 106, with the right hand appearing an octave higher and the left hand two octaves higher, before leaping to an extremely low register.

Example 11. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 7–16

Example 12. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 102–107



Besides only appearing in the context of plagal cadences, the parallel minor of D-flat also plays an important role in this movement. First appearing in 19 (Example 13), D-flat minor marks the beginning of the B section along with a marked change in texture defined by a song-like melody and accompaniment in the right and left hands. But the stability of this D-flat minor passage is brief, appearing only as a short four-measure phrase. By m. 23, a deletion of all flats in the key signature takes the movement away from D-flat, now enharmonically reinterpreted as C-sharp minor, with a new phrase appearing in its relative major: E major.

Example 13. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 17–24



The first and brief appearance of D-flat in the final movement of the sonata is smoothly presented in mm. 29–32 (Example 14) as part of a sequence in the movement’s prominent galloping rhythmic pattern. Its second appearance in mm. 49–56 (Example 15) is more intense than the first, mostly because more extreme musical features occur in this short musical phrase, carrying on the intensity from its preceding measures. These features include a chromatically ascending right hand figure in broken octaves from a mid-bass clef register up to the high A-flat[7], a sweeping crescendo culminating with a *ff* in m. 49, an immediate and cancelling *decrescendo* to a *p* in mm. 49–51, and a *subito ff* in m. 53, all while oscillating between D-flat major and minor phrases: mm. 49–52 (minor); mm. 53–56 in (major).

Example 14. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 23–35

The musical score for Example 14, Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, measures 23–35, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 23 to 32, and the second system covers measures 30 to 35. The key signature is C minor (three flats). The right hand plays a chromatically ascending figure in broken octaves, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *fp*, *f*, and *fz*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. Measure numbers 23, 30, and 35 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Example 15. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 49–62



In its last appearance, Schubert again plays with major and minor forms of D-flat.

Beginning in m. 93 (Example 16), D-flat major is firmly established by a strong pedal tone in the bass at *ff*, which lasts for twenty measures and strongly contrasts with the preceding *pp* passage. After a strong unison D-flat in m. 93, three ascending D-flat major scales appear, each beginning in a *subito p* then *crescendo* to *fz*, which return to the strong D-flat unison at the end. The third and final scalar sweep is expanded with five measures of material emphatically emphasizing D-flat major (mm. 107–111), with triumphantly articulated chords. After a grand pause, Schubert once again shifts the music to its parallel minor (C# minor) with a change of key signature. The dynamic quickly drops down to *p* and the texture immediately changes. Schubert here keeps the galloping rhythm in the left hand while the right hand, covering a wide range, constantly crosses over the left throughout the section.

Example 16. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 93–112

### C. Rhythmic and Melodic Motives

Schubert also uses a variety of rhythmic and melodic motives as means of unifying the various movements of this sonata. One of these motives is the use of a prominent pause between musical phrases. In the first movement, there is a calculated pause that appears just before the beginning of the second theme in mm. 38–39 (Example 17). In this instance it is only two quarter rests long. Over the course of the piece, Schubert expands this rest gesture to encompass entire measures, as it gradually appears as dramatic grand pauses. The first of these whole-measure rests appears just before the coda of the first movement in m. 248 (Example 18). Here this grand pause dramatically interrupts the musical texture. Just before its appearance, the closing theme prepares the end of its phrase with a strong dominant pedal in the tonic major. But before a final resolution can be reached (and on a highly tense V7 chord), a full measure of rest with a fermata appears. After this sudden grand pause, the music collapses to c minor, the dark and tragic home key.

Example 17. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 37–43



Example 18. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 243–248



In the second movement, this pause-motive appears as an elongating fermata over sustained pitches, often dividing what would have been a single musical phrase into two separate parts. For example, the fermatas in m. 12 and its repetition in m. 16 (Example 19) divide a short six-measure phrase into two different phrases with two cadences. When the fermata appears in m. 54 and m. 59 (Example 20), not only does it divide the phrase, it also is used to convincingly modulate to new tonal areas: from D-flat major to D major, and then to A major. Here, Schubert uses the lingering of the fermata over prominent chords to force the pianists to allow for the tones to naturally decay, thereby clearing the sonic palate (so to speak) so that the shock of these distant modulations happens as smoothly as possible. The same sort of pause returns in mm. 105–107 (Example 21). The three fermatas (one in each measure) again are used to smoothly transition between distant keys: from C major to D-flat major, and from D-flat major to D major. The order of these keys also echoes, in a reversed order, the keys of the first movement's development: D major in m. 117, D-flat major in m. 140 and C major in 145.

Example 19. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 12–16



Example 20. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 50–59

Example 21. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 102–107

Once again, the third movement reflects on the stark contrast between the first two movements: this pause-motive is used to summarize its role in the first and second movements. A

whole-measure rest returns in mm. 33 and 38 (Example 22) as a sudden grand pause interrupting the phrase. Because of the rest, the end of the first four-measure phrase mm. 29–32 creates a half cadence in C minor. But on the other side of the grand pause, the musical texture seamlessly shifts to the key of A-flat major. The second phrase, mm. 34–37, begins in A-flat major but ends in its relative minor (F minor) in a weak harmonic position with the third scale degree in the bass. Again in m. 38 another grand pause appears. This time its following phrase cadences in the tonic C minor.

Example 22. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 28–41

In the last movement, this pause-motive appears again as a grand pause, usually as a single measure of rest expanded with a fermata. Unlike in previous movements, its function in the finale is no longer to divide or interrupt a single phrase, but to divide whole sections and to change key. Its first appearance in the movement (Example 23, m. 112), a whole-measure rest with fermata, indicates the end of the first theme and beginning of the second theme in the next measure. Accompanying this pause is a complete change of the key signature, from three flats to C# minor in m. 113. As discussed above, the tonal relationship changes enharmonically from D-flat major so that the pause in m. 112 naturally guides the listener's ears from the previous key to the new key. However, the two measures of the pause in mm. 241–242 (Example 24) is

somewhat different. It marks the end of the exposition and the beginning of the development, but in terms of tonal relationship, the two keys that end the exposition and begin the development are not related: the exposition ends in V of E-flat major and the development begins in B major with a change of a key signature. There is absolutely no hint of modulating to B major. Only two measures of rests, which like before are used to make this extravagant modulation as smooth as possible. The last pause is a brief rest (an eighth rest!) expanded with a fermata just before the beginning of the recapitulation in m. 428 (Example 25). Unlike other pauses that modulated to new keys, this pause only divides the sections of the development and the recapitulation without modulating, since a dominant pedal tone was already set to return to the tonic in m. 429. The last appearance of this motive returns in the recapitulation just before the second theme, and once again is used to modulate between the keys of B-flat minor and its relative major.

Example 23. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 105–112



Example 24. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 232–242



Example 25. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 423–429



The quiet and simple dancing rhythm of the trio section of the *Menuetto* (mm. 46–47) recalls the rhythm of the second theme in the first movement (see Example 17, mm. 40–41): a half note followed by a quarter note and six eighth notes in a same meter, 3/4. In the first movement, the rhythmic pattern happens in both hands, but in the third movement, only the right plays it. But the rising third motive in the opening theme of the Trio, C to E-flat in m. 45, recalls that of the second movement, G to B-flat in m. 1. And the ascending chromatic voice leading of its harmonic progression from A-flat major to F minor, B-flat, B natural and C in mm. 48–50 in the third movement reminiscences the same chromatic notes and harmonic progression in mm. 4–5 in the second movement.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 196.



## 2. Sonata in A Major, D. 959

Schubert's Sonata in A Major (D. 959) represents the most thoroughly cyclic work in all Schubert's instrumental music. In it, Schubert forges harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and motivic connections and resonances across all four movements of this immense sonata as a means of unifying it.

### A. Key of C Major

In terms of tonal relationships, the most significant key after the tonic is C major. The key of C major, a remote key both in relation to the tonic (A) and dominant (E) of this sonata, frequently appears with dramatic musical elements. Schubert introduces C major as the first non-tonic key in the first movement's exposition by placing it in the middle of sequences in m. 30 (Example 26). After stating a heroic opening theme and its repetition at a contrasting dynamic level, Schubert reaches a dominant chord in m. 28 and then begins to modulate to a new key every two measures with an ascending chromatic bassline in the left hand. As C major is presented, the dynamic immediately drops to *p* and quickly proceeds to another key (A-flat major) by the same ascending chromatic bass pattern. C major reappears within the same harmonic sequential progression albeit with different melody and texture after the second theme's presentation in m. 85 (Example 27). When it returns this second time, Schubert writes it in three-voice counterpoint with extreme use of chromaticism, made all the more jarring by suddenly arriving at a *f* dynamic.

Example 26. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 27–31



Example 27. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 82–86



However the most prominent passage of C major does not appear until the first movement's development in m. 130 (Example 28). Schubert ends the closing theme in E major and it seems more likely to finish in the same key by repeating tonic and dominant over a strong tonic pedal tone, but then, all of sudden, Schubert cancels all the sharps in the second half of m. 129 and moves one half step lower in the bass to arrive on the dominant of C major. When the development begins in the following measure, Schubert even cancels the sharps by changing the key signature. Here, the C major development gains a new rhythmic pulse, texture, and theme—one defined by a repeated simple eighth note pulse and chords in the left hand and a melody in the right hand consisting of a small scalar gesture which eventually expands into a longer scalar passage in mm. 141–142 and 146–147. The new four-measure theme in C major finds itself transposed to B major. Schubert alternates this material between C and B three times,<sup>6</sup> with the

<sup>6</sup> Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980), 289.

last one appearing in the parallel minor, B minor, but still cadencing in C major in m. 160. But soon the C major sonority dies away and Schubert repeats the material in C minor instantly before yielding to the retransition's inevitable dominant.

The last appearance of C major in the first movement is at the third theme of the recapitulation in m. 266 (Example 29). All the themes from the exposition return in A major, but only the third theme is in C major. Unlike the preceding C major phrase, this one is gentler and has a more songful melody on the top. Although the C major passage in the development has the same repeated eighth note rhythmic pattern in the accompaniment, the left-hand part in the second theme is more flowing.

Example 28. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. 129-168

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Franz Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D. 959, specifically measures 129 through 168. The score is written for piano and is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 129-130) features a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a repeated eighth-note pattern in the left hand, while the treble staff has a more melodic line. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *f*. The second system (measures 131-134) continues the eighth-note pattern in the left hand and has a more flowing melody in the right hand. The dynamic is *p*. The third system (measures 135-138) shows the eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a more flowing melody in the right hand. The dynamic is *pp*. The key signature is A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#).

Example 28, continued.

This musical score continues Example 28, spanning measures 139 to 158. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into systems of two staves each. Measure numbers 139, 142, 145, 148, 152, 155, and 158 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The music features a variety of textures, including arpeggiated chords, sustained chords, and melodic lines. Dynamics are marked throughout, including *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *cresc.* (crescendo), *f* (forte), *ff* (fortissimo), and *decresc.* (decrescendo). A fermata is present over a chord in measure 142. The score concludes with a final chord in measure 158.

Example 28, continued.

Example 29. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 260–276

Example 30 (m. 17) shows C major's return in the middle section of the *Scherzo*. After finishing an opening theme in A major, Schubert abruptly juxtaposes C major with various contrasting musical features vis-à-vis the opening phrase that includes a melody with a falling

figure from a high to low register, soft dynamic range in *p*, and accented downbeats with occasional accented third beats. The moment that the C major phrase is introduced is remarkable in many ways. The most extreme change is in its texture. It begins at a unison, in a low register (both hands are confined to the bass clef staff) and a sudden energetic *f*. This quick and short phrase ends with a half cadence (m. 21) and Schubert extends the dominant pedal for twelve measures and then modulates to a new key.

Example 30. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 17–44

The last C major section appears in m. 92 of the last movement (Example 31). This C major is notably different than the previous occurrences. All phrases in C major appeared or modulated away from the key of A major. However, the last C major phrase arrives out of a

passage in E minor without changing any musical ideas. There is no textural change or dynamic change. Schubert still maintains the *pp* dynamic and the running triplet figure which had been presented much earlier in m. 17. But the alternating bass notes, C and B, recall the harmonic and key changes of the C major section in the first movement's development.

Example 31. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4th mov. mm. 90–106

The musical score for Example 31, Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4th movement, measures 90–106, is presented in four systems. The key signature is A major (three sharps). The time signature is 3/4. The score begins at measure 90 with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The bass line features a running triplet figure. The melody in the treble clef is marked with a *pp* dynamic. The score continues through measures 94, 98, and 102. At measure 98, a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking is present. At measure 102, a *f* (forte) dynamic is indicated. The piece concludes at measure 106 with a *p* (piano) dynamic.

## B. Key of C# Minor

C# minor also unifies the sonata and appears in extremely intensified musical moments in the second, third, and last movements. In the first movement, Schubert emphasizes C major in its development more than C# minor, yet C# minor has a greater role in the later movements. Its first appearance in the second movement (Example 32, m. 116) shows the dynamic and registral

extremes of the piano. After a recitative-like and fantasia-like middle section with a series of modulations, Schubert finally arrives in C# minor in m. 116 by means of a chromatically moving bass line in an extremely low register starting from m. 109. The dynamic quickly drops down to *p*, but the melody continues ascending chromatically and doubles in octaves in the right hand—this all occurring over written out C# tremolo in the left hand with a *crescendo* and *f* written in alternating measures. When the right hand reaches to the pounding chords in mm. 120–122, the left hand begins ascending with a C# minor scale that culminates with a first inversion C# minor harmony in m. 122 with *ffz*. The recitative returns in a contrasting soft dynamic and the C# minor chord follows, but it momentarily modulates to semitone higher in D major (m. 128) by means of a chromatically descending scale in the left hand. The C# minor recitative returns in m. 132 and speaks at a whisper while pounding chords in the left hand interrupt with sudden *fz*. The pounding chords gradually become softer and land in C# major. This new, major-mode space lasts for twelve measures as dominant pedal of the tonic, F# minor, and is marked by a change in texture, most noticeably seen in the accompaniment where the bass and the newly-added broken chords in an inner voice are separately written in different hands (m. 147).



Example 32. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. 105–151

This musical score is for the second movement of Franz Liszt's Sonata in A Major, D. 959, measures 105 to 151. The score is written for piano and features a variety of musical techniques and dynamics. The key signature is A major (three sharps). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into six systems, each with a measure number at the beginning of the first staff. The first system (measures 105-107) begins with a forte (ff) dynamic and features a series of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 108-110) continues the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and introduces a sixteenth-note bass line. The third system (measures 111-113) features a crescendo (cresc.) marking and a forte (ff) dynamic. The fourth system (measures 114-116) includes a piano (p) dynamic and a series of eighth notes in the right hand. The fifth system (measures 117-119) features a crescendo (cresc.) marking and a forte (f) dynamic. The sixth system (measures 120-122) begins with a forte (ff) dynamic and features a series of eighth notes in the right hand. The score concludes with a piano (p) dynamic and a series of eighth notes in the right hand. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 32, continued.

The musical score for Example 32, continued, spans measures 124 to 147. It is written for piano in C# minor. The score is divided into five systems. The first system (measures 124-127) begins with a forte fortissimo (ffz) chord and a piano (p) melody. The second system (measures 128-133) continues the piano melody and includes a forte fortissimo (ffz) chord. The third system (measures 134-139) features a piano (p) melody and a forte fortissimo (ffz) chord. The fourth system (measures 140-146) includes a piano (p) melody and a piano-piano (pp) chord. The fifth system (measures 147-150) concludes with a piano (p) melody and a piano-piano (pp) chord. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

The *Scherzo* has the strongest and most direct C# minor cyclic elements, which are clearest in its intensive musical apex. In the middle of the *Scherzo*, Schubert suddenly modulates to C major as discussed above, yet then he modulates again to C# minor by reintroducing a descending C# minor scale in mm. 34–35 (Example 33)—a scalar gesture which previously appeared in the second movement (mm. 108–109). Along with the scale, Schubert intensifies this passage with an extreme dynamic change interrupting a *decrecendo* with a *subito ff*, and through

the first presentation of a smaller note value—sixteenth notes—to the movement. A grand pause follows immediately after this tempestuous gesture which prepares the much calmer c-sharp minor melody that follows. The entire C# minor section from mm. 38–49 is tranquil but never quite loses all of that initial dramatic tension. It too precisely oscillates between dynamic levels (from *p* to *pp*) while agogic accents in musically weak beats in the right hand and an absence of downbeats in the left hand create a light and energetic dance-like gesture. Towards the end of the section (m. 41 and 47), Schubert adds a Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup> of C# minor, which is a subdominant of A major, as a way of returning to the tonic.

Example 33. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 31–53

The final passage of C# minor appears in the last movement, in the most intensive and vehement musical climax, and last about forty-three measures as shown in Example 34. In this passage, C# minor ultimately mixes with C# major (mm. 168–210) as part of an extremely long dominant pedal to its false recapitulation in F# major in m. 211. Schubert already built musical intensity at the beginning of the development (m. 142). He does this through the presentation of a

theme in a parallel minor, A minor, and a series of sequences with a melodic fragment taken from a theme in a circle of fifth sequence (A minor–E minor–B minor–F# minor). Finally the music culminates in C# minor with a sudden drop of dynamic while still carrying this thematic fragment as its main musical idea. Beginning in m. 179, C# minor is stated one last time, with an expansive melody covering much of the instrument's range, including hand crossings. He repeats this hand crossing gesture for more than twelve measures, continuing past the change to C# major. Even after the music dies away to *pp*, its intensity continues through the alternating harmonic change between C# major and F# minor harmonies.

Example 34. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 139–211

The musical score for Example 34, Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, measures 139–211, is presented in three systems. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The first system (measures 139–142) begins with a treble staff featuring a rapid ascending scale and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system (measures 143–146) continues the treble staff's melodic line and the bass staff's accompaniment. The third system (measures 147–150) shows the treble staff with a more complex, arpeggiated melody and the bass staff with a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

Example 34, continued.

This musical score continues Example 34, spanning measures 152 to 177. The piece is in 2/4 time and D major. The notation is for piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. Measure numbers 152, 158, 162, 166, 170, 174, and 177 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The score features a variety of musical elements: eighth and sixteenth note patterns, triplets, and dynamic markings including *fz* (forzando), *fp* (for piano), *p* (piano), and *fz* (forzando). Some notes are marked with an 'x' to indicate specific articulation. Several passages are highlighted in yellow, including a triplet in measure 162, a sixteenth-note run in measure 170, and sixteenth-note runs in measures 174 and 177. The key signature consists of two sharps (F# and C#).

Example 34, continued.

This musical score continues Example 34, spanning measures 180 to 200. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. Measure numbers 180, 184, 188, 192, 196, and 200 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The music features a complex interplay of melodic lines and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) at measure 180, *fp* (fortissimo piano) at measure 200, and *decresc.* (decrescendo) at measure 200. Articulation marks such as accents and slurs are used throughout. A repeat sign with first and second endings is present at measure 192. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.



Example 34, continued.

### C. Melodic Motives

Schubert also uses various rhythmic and melodic motives to unify the movements as a cyclic sonata. A prominent one of these motives is a descending second gesture which appears in both the first and the second movements. This descending second motive (A–G#) first appears in a melodic line at the end of the opening phrase creating a half cadence in m. 6.<sup>7</sup> It appears again in the third theme beginning in m. 65. Here, in Example 35, a more elaborated version of this descending second motive appears, now with the passing notes G–F# in mm. 65–66, E–D# in m. 70 and again in mm. 80–81. The second movement takes the descending second motive more seriously: an opening melody consists of the descending second sigh figure that repeats six times in the first section.<sup>8</sup> Along with the melody, the bass plays the descending second motive too, here as F#–E#. Schubert continues using the sigh motive in the middle section as a part of a chromatic passage, beginning in m. 69. The descending second motive in the third movement is obscured compared to the first two movements. Its first appearance is brief in the bass, A–G# in

<sup>7</sup> See Example 69 (Chapter 3, p. 71).

<sup>8</sup> See Example 74 (Chapter 3, p. 74).

mm. 1–2.<sup>9</sup> The Trio has an inversion of the motive in the right hand melody: F#–G in mm. 80–81 and E–F in mm. 88–89.

Example 35. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 65–81

The opening phrase of the last movement is very similar to that of the first movement: the first four-measure antecedent ends with A–G# in a half cadence. This descending second motive is presented even though the theme appears in different keys. For example, the development starting in m. 142 (Example 34), has a series of sequences with a melodic fragment from the first two bars of the opening theme. At the end of each fragment, a strong descending second motive alternating between the two hands occurs: E–D# in m. 147, B–A# in m. 149, A–G# in m. 150, B–A# in m. 154, F#–E# in m. 156, G–F# in mm. 160–161, D–C# in mm. 164–165, G–F## in mm. 169–176, and an inverted motive of B#–C# in mm. 180–188.

<sup>9</sup> See Example 47 (Chapter 3, p. 53).



In this sonata, similar to Sonata in C Minor (D. 958), the third movement summarizes the important motives from the previous movements. First, the movement begins with an arpeggiated chord. This arpeggiated gesture arises out of a series of arpeggiated chords that appear in the final passage of the immediately preceding second movement—chords that appear in both hands and in a low register in mm. 196–202 (Example 36). Schubert then, continues this gesture to the opening of the next movement,<sup>10</sup> as a way of immediately connecting the two movements. Although the *Scherzo* begins in a contrasting high register and in quick tempo, this shared motivic material fosters a sense similar to an *attacca*.

Example 36. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 195–202



Charles Fisk also argues that the two motives from the first two measures of the first movement are included in the beginning of the third movement: the octave leap in the left hand in m. 1 and ascending minor second in m. 8. The variants of the motives in the *Scherzo* are elaborated in its first two measures: A to A (an octave leap) and A to G# (a minor second motive)<sup>11</sup> and mm. 11–16 with E to E (an octave leap) and E to D# (a minor second motive).<sup>12</sup> The octave leap returns in the left hand in the Trio (m. 80 in Example 37), but it is inverted as a low-to-high gesture. Again in the middle of the Trio (m. 88) the same notes (A–A) recall the opening measure of the first movement.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 226.

Example 37. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 77–101

The descending C# minor scale is another unifying motive between the second and third movement. The chromatic sequences in the middle section of the second movement leads to its appearance in mm. 107–108 from Example 32 with extreme musical features: a recitative-like melody with fanatical trills, broken octaves, close registral position between two hands creating intensive and harsh sonority, and passionate loud dynamics. In the third movement, the descending C# minor scale in mm. 34–36 from Example 33 appears more sporadically than in the second movement. Its sudden appearance is quite surprising after a long, decrescendoing dominant pedal in C major. This dramatic jolt away from C major, melodically heralded by the motive of a C# minor scale from the previous movement, is what makes the musical climax of this movement so striking, by immediately modulating from one key to another and by completely changing the mood of the piece.

An important cyclic element found in the second theme of the last movement is the presentation of important keys from the previous movements: F# minor (m. 56) from the second movement, D major (m. 71) from the third movement, and C major (m. 92) from the development of the first movement. Each of the three keys returned in the last movement has a significant meaning in the previous movements: F# minor is the relative minor of the second movement's tonic A major; D major is both the key of the Trio and marked the musical climax of the second movement (mm. 129–131); and C major is a key that governs the whole development of the first movement. In the last movement, Schubert takes a melodic fragment from the second theme and presents it along with perpetual running triplets in those keys.

However, the most significant and strongest unifying feature in this piece is the return of the first movement's opening theme at the end of Coda in mm. 377–382 (Example 38). The Coda with a tempo change to *Presto* consists of a fragment from the second theme of the last movement and has a sense of a quasi-development section by being saturated with sequences. After repeating a thematic fragment (mm. 368–375), an A major ascending arpeggio (which recalls the descending arpeggios in the beginning of the first movement in m. 7) announces this final cyclic element: the return of the first movement's opening theme. The last few bars of the Coda contain more of a harmonic quotation than a melodic one. Even though this is a prominent repetition of thematic material shared across movements, Schubert still varies this theme considerably in its appearance in the Coda, including metrical shifts, accents and emphasis on the third beat, the absence of dotted rhythms, and a strengthening of the octave leap gesture through a unison doubling.

Example 38. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 365–382

The image displays a musical score for the fourth movement of the Sonata in A Major, D. 959, measures 365–382. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of staves.

**System 1 (Measures 365–370):** The right hand (treble clef) features a series of chords and single notes, with dynamics *fz* (forzando) and *pp* (pianissimo). The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A first ending bracket labeled "1" spans measures 368–370.

**System 2 (Measures 371–375):** The right hand continues with chords and single notes, marked with *dimin.* (diminuendo) and *ff* (fortissimo). The left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment.

**System 3 (Measures 376–382):** The right hand features a melodic line with a trill in measure 376, followed by chords and single notes, marked with *fz*. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment, ending with a final chord in measure 382.

### 3. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960

The four movements of Sonata in B-flat Major (D. 960) are also unified by subtle melodic and harmonic cyclic motives, which are even more cleverly disguised than in the other late sonatas by elaborate figurations.

#### A. G-flat

In Sonata in b-flat major (D. 960) Schubert emphasizes G-flat, with flat VI serving as an important element both as a note and a key. This first appears in the movement's opening theme with a trilled G-flat in m. 8.<sup>13</sup> This trill has no mere decorative function. With its textural, dynamic, rhythmic and registral features, it immediately seizes the listener's attention and consequently has long captured the imagination of pianists and critics. Joseph Kerman, for instance, has described its initial appearance as a "mysterious, impressive, cryptic, Romantic gesture."<sup>14</sup> What an apt description! The trill first appears, as soft and low as possible, with the effect of dissociating this G-flat from the phrase. But when the phrase repeats, the G-flat initially returns no longer in a dissociating register but rather as part of a continuous bass line, one that passes downward from the tonic B-flat through A-flat and G-natural.<sup>15</sup> When this phrase concludes, the B-flat trill substitutes the G-flat trill in m. 19—yet this is not an abandonment of this motive's G-flat association—and now serves as a common tone in a modulation that takes the music to G-flat major (flat VI)<sup>16</sup> in the following measure. It is as if the first, "mysterious,"

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<sup>13</sup> See Example 70 (Chapter 3, p. 72).

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Kerman, "A Romantic Detail in Schubert's 'Schwanengesang'" in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 59.

<sup>15</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Graham Hunt states in his article that "I to flat-vi can be described in neo-Riemannian terms as "PLP" (*Parallel-Leittonwechsel-Parallel*), three notches around a "Hexatonic cycle" that consists of B-flat, G-flat(F#)-D back to B-flat."": Graham Hunt, "The Three-Key Trimodular Block and Its Classical Precedents: Sonata Exposition of Schubert and Brahms," *Intégral* 23 (1993): 95. Mak argues in his essay that "the flat-VI is given emphasis not only in the second group, but also in the first." Su Yin Mak, "Schubert's Sonata Forms and the Poetics of the Lyric," *The Journal of Musicology* 23, no. 2 (Spring, 2006): 268.

and “cryptic” G-flat trill foreshadows this key change. Because of this striking association, whenever this low and soft trilled gesture returns in the piece (as in the development), even when occurring on different pitches, it definitely recalls that initial G-flat trill.

Charles Rosen has written about the trill that “the more one plays it, the more the entire work seems to arise out of that mysterious sonority.”<sup>17</sup> The G-flat trill does not return later in the rest of the movement, but its pitch is an important unifying factor. The first two melodic pitches of the second movement are G# and F# which are enharmonically the same as G-flat and A-flat of the first movement’s trill. The trill still casts its shadow throughout the second movement each time this theme returns.

## B. Harmonic and Melodic Motives

The four movements of the Sonata in B-flat Major are closely related by harmonic and melodic motives. C# minor, the key of the second movement, is one of these unifying features. Its first presence is at the beginning of the first movement’s development in m. 118.<sup>18</sup> In the development, the sonata’s opening theme is presented in a very remote key from the tonic—a sad and melancholy C# minor.<sup>19</sup> The key itself foreshadows and anticipates the sorrowful second movement. Even with its first movement foreshadowing, it remains striking to hear a C# minor chord appear after the previous movement ended with a B-flat major chord. The parallel major of C# minor (enharmonically notated as D-flat major) also plays an important cyclic role in the sonata. D-flat major is tonicized in the middle of the first movement’s development (m. 150) as a start of new sequences. This D-flat major returns in the *Scherzo* (m. 35) instead of C# minor as a way of connecting the first and the third movements. Similar to the moment when D-flat major is

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<sup>17</sup> Rosen, *Sonata Form*, 249.

<sup>18</sup> See Example 49 (Chapter 3, p. 55).

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Siegel’s PhD dissertation discusses Schubert’s presentation of a remote key between the tonic and the dominant in the exposition of the B-flat Major Sonata’s first movement. Lawrence Siegel, “Schubert’s Harmonic Geometry: Structural Means in the First Movement of the B-flat Piano Sonata, D. 960” (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1988).

placed in the first movement, the D-flat major passage in the *Scherzo* is positioned in the middle of the movement with a soft dynamic and with the pitch itself acting as a pedal tone in the bass. However, the D-flat in the first movement later slips down chromatically and modulates to E Major, whereas the D-flat in *Scherzo* is enharmonically transformed to C# as a way of modulating to F# minor.

The finale opens up with an aggressive, but solid and clear octave G<sup>20</sup> in Example 39 and establishes the key of C minor. Even with no trill, this bass progression (G–G flat–F) is a recasting of the progression from the first movement’s second phrase. Fisk further argues that the length of the G-flat in proportion to the G’s that precede it in the first movement is exactly the same as in the opening bass progression of the finale.<sup>21</sup> In the finale, C minor is established over the G pedal tone, and along with a bass progression, a melody contains the same four pitches (D, C, B, and E-flat) from the first movement.<sup>22</sup> As both the first and last movements move to B-flat major, the two melodies share same melodic pitches again, C, B-flat, A, and D, although the order is different.<sup>23</sup>

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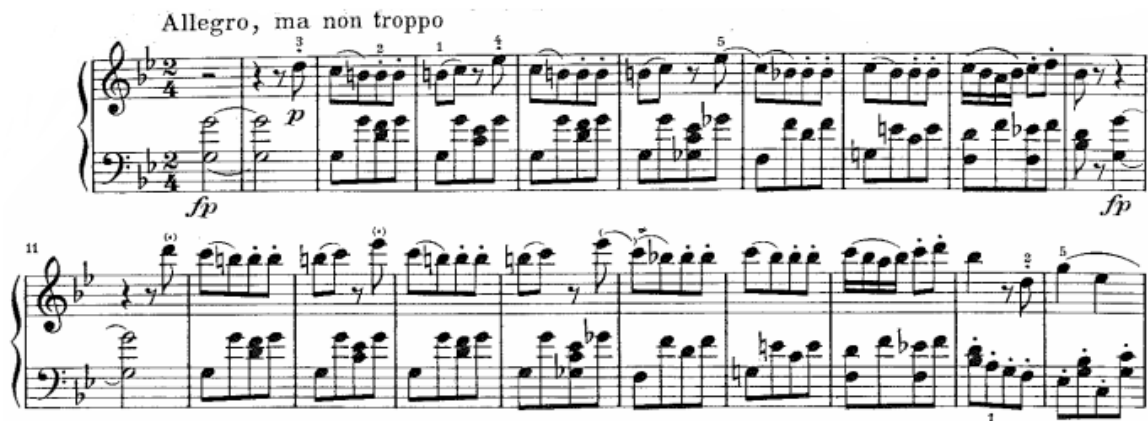
<sup>20</sup> The opening solid G, which is abruptly presented after a quiet and charming B-flat major chord at the end of the *Scherzo* (like the C# minor chord at the beginning of the second movement after a peaceful B-flat major chord at the end of the first movement), does resemble Beethoven’s String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130, Finale. However, Schubert’s finale is homophonic compared to the contrapuntal texture of a string quartet. Schubert’s opening G more recalls the opening G of his own Impromptu in C Minor, D. 899, No.1. The opening G of the Impromptu is closely related to its home key, but it doesn’t modulate to a new key within an opening phrase. The opening G in the finale of Sonata in B-flat Major immediately loses its sound after few bars and returns to a home key. It has a tendency to go back to G after each phrase ends. Edward T. Cone notes that “the main themes of the finales of Schubert’s Sonata in B-flat Major and Beethoven’s quartet in the same key, Op. 130, have many points in common. These include the dance-like 2/4 meter, the introductory G and its continuation as a pedal, the interpretation of this G as V of II, and the ensuing establishment of the tonic. What is not often observed is that the two movements have certain unusual formal elements in common.” Edward T. Cone, “Schubert’s Beethoven,” *The Musical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (October, 1970): 780. Alfred Einstein also comments on Schubert’s finale in his book as “an echo of Beethoven’s Finale of B-flat Major Quartet, Op.130.” Alfred Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 287.

<sup>21</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 33.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Example 39. Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 1–20



This sonata has two main sets of melodic-motivic material. The first distinct melodic motive is found in the return of the first movement's opening theme in the central section of the second movement in m. 43.<sup>24</sup> In this movement, the first movement's opening theme is transposed a half step down to A major from B-flat major. The shape of the melodic line in both movements is the same, and harmonically, when the melody repeats for the second time, they both emphasize the supertonic (ii): C minor in the first movement (m. 15) and B minor in the second movement (m. 49). The third movement does not fully associate with the first movement's opening theme, but the rising third from the opening theme, B-flat to D, is observed in the beginning of the third movement (mm. 1–2), yet now transformed with a light and delightful quality.

The second unifying melodic motive is found in the melodic contour in the second movement and the finale. The second theme of the finale in mm. 86–94 (Example 40) has a melodic line with scale degrees 5–8–7–6–6–5–5–4–4–3–3–2–(2–1–7–6–5), which is previously found in the final A section of the second movement when the theme is presented in C Major (mm. 103–106) with the same series of scale degrees, 5–8–7–6–6–5–5–4–3–1. Although Schubert

<sup>24</sup> See Example 76 (Chapter 3, p. 75).



changes the rhythm, texture, and tempo of this melodic motive, this motive is presented clearly as the melody in the top-most voice in both movements, fostering a sense of resonance between the movements.

Example 40. Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 82–98

This musical score for measures 82-98 of the 4th movement of Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, is written for piano. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 82-87) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with accompaniment. The second system (measures 88-92) continues the melodic development in the treble staff. The third system (measures 93-98) concludes the passage. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings, and is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Example 41. Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 103–106

This musical score for measures 103-106 of the 2nd movement of Sonata B-flat Major, D. 960, is written for piano. It consists of a single system of staves. The treble staff features a melodic line with a piano (*pp*) dynamic marking. The bass staff provides accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

### Chapter III: Cyclic Elements in the Three Sonatas

Not only are each of Schubert's last three piano sonatas (D. 958, 959, and 960) cyclically organized by motivic relationships among their internal movements, these works also share motivic elements with each other, creating a multi-work cycle. One of Schubert's predecessors, Beethoven, had already composed his last three piano sonatas, Op. 109, 110 and 111, by the time Schubert composed the works analyzed here. Beethoven's last three sonatas are often referred to as a trilogy, with interrelated motives of thirds and fourths and quotations between movements.<sup>1</sup> In terms of form, he achieved a new condensation, flexibility and variety in all three,<sup>2</sup> and they all turn away from tradition by having movements cast as variations and fugues,<sup>3</sup> which, in all three, he treats as "the culmination of an extended cyclic form."<sup>4</sup> His finales in those sonatas summarize the important musical motives from the previous movements. Having them together, the musical weight is more on the last movement than the first movement, and the length of the last movement is doubled compared to the rest of the movements. In Schubert's last three piano sonatas, he keeps the standard conventional structure of sonata-movements with the cyclic elements including key relationships and more traditional musical motives, some of which are disguised by highly embellished and varied musical features.

The cyclic nature of these pieces have been noted by other commentators. The concert pianist Alfred Brendel, for instance, thematizes cyclic elements in his essay "Schubert's Last Sonata."<sup>5</sup> There he provides a plethora of musical examples that demonstrate motivic

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<sup>1</sup> Uchida, Program note to Ludwig v. Beethoven, *Piano Sonatas: Op. 109, 110 & 111*, performed by Mitsuko Uchida, piano, Phillips, 000637902, 2006, CD.

<sup>2</sup> Denis Matthews, *Beethoven Piano Sonatas: BBC Music Guide* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 51.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Matthews, "Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms," in *Keyboard Music*, (Newton: David & Charles, 1972), 180.

<sup>4</sup> William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 342.

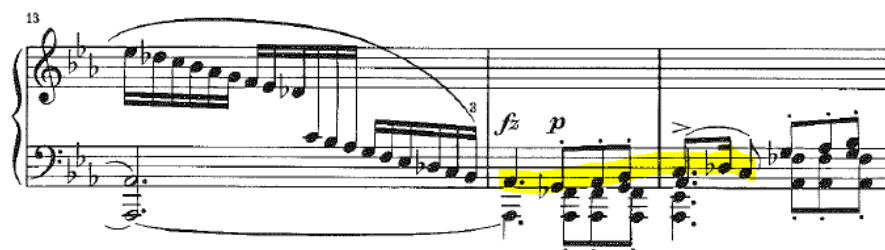
<sup>5</sup> Alfred Brendel, "Schubert's Last Sonatas," in *Alfred Brendel on Music: His Collected Essay* (London: Robinson Books, 2007), 153-215.

relationships throughout these late sonatas. For Brendel, non-rhythmic motivic germs, which he calls constellations, are crucial. These constellations arise out of melodic-motivic relationships that emerge between themes, movements, and sonatas. They cluster around particular pitches and range in size from a couple notes to a long sequence. Yet Brendel never fully delves into the immediate significance of these relationships, especially concerning the individual appearances of the elements that form these constellations. As a result, what is going on musically at these moment and how the motives are written or used are left underdeveloped in his essay. My Chapter 3 explores these motivic relationships and their immediate contexts in greater detail. In Chapter 3, I hope to have uncovered the strongest examples of this compositional technique in Schubert's sonatas. And although many of these examples are shared with Brendel's constellations, I have added several instances that Brendel fails to mention, in particular a new motivic device that I call A-flat interpolation (part 6). For ease of reading, I have altered the names of these constellations and motives.

## 1. Diminished Fifth Melodies.<sup>6</sup>

Among the unifying motives, a melody of a diminished fifth is the most significant in the three sonatas.<sup>7</sup> In Example 42 this motive, G to D-flat, appears in the first movement of Sonata in C Minor (D. 958) in mm. 14–15. It repeats an octave higher twice in the following measures, tonicizing accented A-flat major chords (mm. 15–16). This moment is dramatically presented after rapid descending scales and a sudden dynamic change from *ff* to *p*, creating a mysterious yet characteristic sound of a diminished melody.

Example 42. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 13–15



It appears again in the beginning measures of the second theme in mm. 39–43 (Example 43), but now inverted as A-flat to D before ascending to A-flat from D. This motive is often presented in ways that sometimes obscure its identity. Sometimes it appears as a homophonic chordal texture (mm. 39–42), as a song texture with a clear melody and an accompaniment (mm. 53–58), or as a pianistic texture with broken chords and leaps (mm. 67–71), sometimes at a slow rhythmic pacing (with no sixteenth notes pulse level), or even as a gentle melody in a major key.

<sup>6</sup> Brendel's name for this motivic constellation is the "Fifth formula," "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 177.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Example 43. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 37-43



The motive returns in the beginning of the second movement in both hands as a wedge-like gesture in mm. 1–3 (Example 44): the right hand plays G to D-flat, the left hand, D-flat to G.<sup>8</sup> Example 45 shows the reappearance of the motive in the middle section of the second movement. Each time it appears in this section it sounds at a different pitch level: first from E-flat to B-double flat (mm. 19–20, in d-flat minor), second from D# to A (mm. 23–25, in E major), and finally from F# to C (mm. 29–30, in E minor).

Example 44. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–6



<sup>8</sup> Charles Fisk, "Schubert Recollects Himself: The Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958," *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (Winter, 2000): 639.

Example 45. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 17–31

In Sonata in A Major (D. 959), the diminished fifth melodic motive, G# to D, first appears in the opening theme of the second movement with an ascending (mm. 1–6) and descending motion (mm. 7–8). In Example 46, the notes of the motive are transposed a half step up in “A major position,”<sup>9</sup> which the pitches of the diminished fifth motive belong to. Example 47 shows another “A major position” motive in the bass line of the beginning of the third movement. The motive begins in the bass line, then it continues in the inner voice of the chords (m. 4). After a stormy descending scale (mm. 33–36), the motive returns in a variation, B# to F#,

<sup>9</sup> Brendel talks that some motives are distinguished by ‘A major position’, even when located in Sonata in B-flat Major, “Schubert’s Last Sonatas,” 177.

in mm. 38–39 (Example 48). The last appearance in Sonata in A Major is in the finale starting in m. 173.<sup>10</sup> Here the same B# to F# diminished 5<sup>th</sup> melodic motive is presented in the rapidly moving right hand (mm. 173–174). Schubert then varies the motive along with harmonic changes: C## to G# (m. 175), D# to A (m. 176), and E# to B (m. 177), all in shown in Example 34. The Trio of the third movement (mm. 80–83) demonstrates the inverted and transposed diminished fifth melodic motive (G to C#) with an absence of a note, E.<sup>11</sup>

Example 46. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–10



Example 47. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 1–5



<sup>10</sup> See Example 34, highlighted notes (Chapter 2, p. 33).

<sup>11</sup> See Example 37, highlighted notes (Chapter 2, p. 39).

Example 48. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 36–39



The first movement of Sonata in B-flat Major is saturated with the diminished fifth melodic motive. The opening theme contains the diminished fifth melodic motive, A to E-flat in mm. 1–5 with an emphasis on the subdominant in m. 5.<sup>12</sup> This motive, a melodic fragment of the first theme, is frequently presented throughout the movement even though the theme is modulated into different keys. For example, the opening theme returns in C# minor and F# minor in the development (mm. 118–125) as a sequence. Example 49 shows the motive, D# to A in C# minor (mm. 118–121) and the motive, G# to D in F# minor (mm. 122–125). Another occurrence of the motive in the first movement is in mm. 59–62 (Example 50) with the E–A# motive and the motive repeats with embellishment in mm. 63–66. Similar to how the motive appeared in the first movement of Sonata in C Minor in mm. 39–42, it both descends and ascends.

<sup>12</sup> See Example 70 (Chapter 3, p. 72).



Example 49. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 118–127

Example 50. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 969, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 54–68

The diminished fifth melodic motive returns in “A major position” (G# to D) in the middle section of the second movement (mm. 43–46).<sup>13</sup> As a part of a thematic fragment, the motive again has both an ascending and descending melodic profile and is presented twice more when the middle section’s theme returns in mm. 51–54 and mm. 68–71.

The last occurrence of the diminished fifth melodic motive is in the opening theme of the last movement. Example 39 shows the two diminished fifth melodic motives of this theme. The first, E-flat to A, is disguised in the first part of the opening theme (mm. 2–10) by being a highest pitch of the melodic line (E-flat) and a lowest pitch of the melodic line (A). The second, C to F# in mm. 26–27 and 30–31 (Example 51) is rather short and appears as a thematic fragment of the second part of the opening theme. These two motives continually appear as the theme returns throughout the movement.

Example 51. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 21–36

<sup>13</sup> Brendel, “Schubert’s Last Sonatas,” 177 and 180. See also Example 76 (Chapter 3, p. 75).

## 2. Chromatic Motive, Four-Note Cell, F#–G–A flat–G<sup>14</sup>

The chromatic four-note motive is another unifying element in the three sonatas. It appears most frequently in the first movement of Sonata in C Minor. The distinct chromatic four-note cell, F#–G–A flat–G, first occurs in a part of an opening melodic line in mm. 5–7 (Example 1), and later with its variation, G–F#–A flat–G in mm. 25–26 (Example 52). Example 53 shows the excessive use of the motive in the development. Here the motive itself becomes a complete melodic line, and never loses its quality as this chromatic motive, even though it appears in different keys and is sequenced. The same developmental material reappears in the coda, emphasizing the strong chromatic motive in C minor, C–B–D flat–C in mm. 250–251 and mm. 255–256 (Example 54).

Example 52. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 25–26



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<sup>14</sup> Brendel's name for this motivic constellation is the "Seconds formula," "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 193.

Example 53. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 118–161

The musical score for Example 53, Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, measures 118–161, is presented in a single system of seven systems of three staves each. The key signature is C minor (three flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 118 with a piano (pp) dynamic and a decrescendo (decresc.) marking. The bass line features a descending eighth-note scale, while the treble line has a more complex, ascending and then descending pattern. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8). Dynamics change throughout, including a crescendo (cresc.) at measure 125 and a piano (p) marking at measure 129. The score concludes at measure 161.

Example 53, continued.

The musical score for Example 53, continued, spans measures 140 to 158. The key signature is G-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written for piano, with a complex right-hand part and a more rhythmic left-hand part.

- Measure 140:** Right hand starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Left hand has a simple eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *pp*.
- Measure 143:** Right hand continues with intricate sixteenth-note patterns. Left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *pp*, *leggermente*.
- Measure 146:** Right hand features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a series of eighth notes. Left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *ppp*.
- Measure 149:** Right hand continues with intricate sixteenth-note patterns. Left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *ppp*.
- Measure 152:** Right hand features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a series of eighth notes. Left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *ppp*.
- Measure 155:** Right hand continues with intricate sixteenth-note patterns. Left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *cresc.*
- Measure 158:** Right hand features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a series of eighth notes. Left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics: *f*.

Example 54. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 249–257



The chromatic four-note motive appears in all four movements of Sonata in A Major. It first appears in the opening movement, but it is now transposed to C–B–A#–B and functions not a main thematic melody as it is in Sonata in C Minor, but a transitional passage in mm. 43–47 (Example 55). Mm.184–186 (Example 56) shows how Schubert uses this motive, that is, by dividing the four-note cell into two contrasting registers over a steady eighth note accompaniment. As a result of this, each chromatic note is presented in two alternating clefs, creating an exciting conversation just before a long dominant pedal tone.

Example 55. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 41–48

Example 56. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 184–186

In the second movement, the chromatic four-note motive, C#–C natural–B–C in mm. 77–85 (Example 57), is carefully disguised in a long and elaborative transitional passage. However, the motivic four-note cell occurs on the downbeat of each harmonic change, betraying its motivic identity. Schubert writes the motive in a different form in the third movement. In Example 58, it returns twice with short grace notes: G–F#–E#–F# in m. 8, and F natural–E–D#–E in m. 11. The second set is repeated again in m. 17 as a beginning of a new section, but Schubert keeps the grace note as a motivic element with the chromatic four-note motive.



Example 57. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 77–85



Example 58. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 1–16



Similar to the motive in mm. 184–186 of the first movement, mm. 200–203 (Example 59) shows an appearance of it in the last movement, B#–C#–D–C#, in two voices crossing the left hand. It also appears in the retransition.



Example 59. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 4<sup>th</sup> mov, mm. 200–203



The chromatic four-note motive returns in the development of the last movement of Sonata in B-flat Major, with the effect of making the music more excited. The motive successively appears three times in mm. 296–307 (Example 60). Each of these four-note sets is different with each appearance. Here they are ingeniously interlocked, with the last note of each statement of the motive becoming the first note of the next statement: C flat–B flat–A–B flat (mm. 296–298), B flat–A–G#–A (mm. 304–306), and F#–G–A flat–G (mm. 307–309).

Example 60. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 278–316

The musical score for Example 60, Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, measures 278–316, is presented in a single system. The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex melody in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *f<sub>2</sub>*, *decresc.*, *pp*, and *p*. The measures are numbered 278, 284, 290, 296, 302, and 309. The score is written for piano and includes a variety of musical notations, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and chords.

### 3. C#–B#–E Motive<sup>15</sup>

Schubert unifies the slow movements of each sonata by a C#–B#–E motive. This motive is related to the previously discussed chromatic motive F#–G–A flat–G. It appears first in the second movement of Sonata in C Minor, mm. 19–20 (Example 61). Here the motive is enharmonically spelled as D flat–C–F flat, and presented in the bass with the chromatic four-note motive melody in the right hand. In Example 62, from the slow movement of Sonata in A Major, the three-note motive, C#–B#–E is disguised in the melodic line (mm. 132–136) by outlining the motive from the first note of every two measures. The motive returns twice in the first movement and the slow movement of Sonata in B-flat Major. Because the first movement of Sonata in B-flat Major is the only slow first movement among the three sonatas, the expressive device occurs in the first slow movement, too. It occurs in the first movement, where a passing C# and D# connects B# to E in mm. 117–118 (Example 63). Two measures later, the motive is transposed to F#–E#–A in mm. 120–121. Here it is not only a motivic segment, but it creates an expressive bass line. The final return of the motive is in the second movement. Here it is briefly presented in the melody at the end of the first phrase in mm. 9–10 (Example 64) as the head of a rising sequential passage.

Example 61. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov, mm. 17–20



<sup>15</sup> Brendel's name for this motive is "a note constellation, C#, B# E," "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 198.

Example 62. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov, mm. 128–139

128 8<sup>va</sup> *ffz* *p* *ffz* *p* *fz*

134 *p* *cresc.* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Example 63. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 118–119

118 *p* *p*

Example 64. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 6–10

6 *p* *p* *cresc.* *p* *p*

#### 4. Chromatic Scale from E<sup>16</sup>

The ascending chromatic scale from a note E occurs in all three sonatas and unifies them as a cyclic work. There are many ascending chromatic scales in the three sonatas, but the chromatic scales from E occur in important musical moments where they often mark a beginning of a new phrase. It first occurs at the opening melodic line of the first movement in Sonata in C Minor (mm. 3–7).<sup>17</sup> The first note of each measure, E to A-flat (mm. 3–7), belongs to the chromatic scale and each note is strongly presented by an octave figure. In the second movement of the sonata, the ascending chromatic scale appears from the inner voice of the broken chord in mm. 26–29, then it continues with a pedal tone, E, recalling the previous ascending chromatic line in the first movement.<sup>18</sup> The motive briefly appears in the finale of the sonata in mm. 145–147 (Example 65) as E–F–F#–G in the top line of the right hand chord and an expended line to A in mm. 150–153. For the second chromatic scale, Schubert places it in the bottom line of the chord for a variety.

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<sup>16</sup> Brendel's name for this motive is the "Chromatic constellation," "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 199.

<sup>17</sup> See Example 1 (Chapter 2, p. 4).

<sup>18</sup> See Example 45 (Chapter 2, p. 52).

Example 65. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, C Minor, 4<sup>th</sup> mov, mm. 141–156

In the first movement of Sonata in A Major, the rising chromatic motive becomes more significant and occurs frequently. Its first appearance is in the bass line, E to B in mm. 8–13 (Example 66), and soon reappears as E to G in mm. 28–29 (Example 67), as the beginning of sequences. In Example 66, the chromatic bassline's lowest notes are often followed by a leap to drastically different registers, made all the more shocking with prominent accents, creating exciting musical tension. The texture and rhythm of the chromatic line in Example 67 are very similar to those of the chromatic line in Example 66, but its melodic span is shorter (from E to G) and quickly begins to state different chromatic lines (i.e., lines that do not begin with E). The ascending chromatic line E to A-flat returns in an episodic passage starting in m. 82 and appears as before in the bass.

Example 66. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 7–15

Example 67. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 27–29

In the first movement of Sonata in B-flat Major, the ascending chromatic line from E now occurs in the right hand, unlike its bass presentation in Sonata in A Major. The chromatic line, E to G in mm. 159–162 (Example 68) returns in the same register as in the beginning of Sonata in C Minor. Even though the register is the same, Schubert never writes the ascending chromatic line in the same pattern and instead changes the register or rhythm. In mm. 159–162, for instance, the ascending chromatic motive appears with a different rhythmic pattern of a steady stream of repeated eighth notes.

Example 68. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 157–164

The image displays a musical score for measures 157 through 164 of the first movement of the Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, by Franz Schubert. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of staves.

**Measure 157:** The right hand (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Fingering numbers 4, 4, 3, and x are indicated above the first four notes of the right hand.

**Measure 158:** The right hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Fingering numbers 3, 1, and 2 are indicated above the first three notes of the right hand.

**Measure 159:** The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present. Fingering number 2 is indicated above the first note of the right hand.

**Measure 160:** The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Fingering number 2 is indicated above the first note of the right hand.

**Measure 161:** The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Fingering number 2 is indicated above the first note of the right hand.

**Measure 162:** The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. Fingering number 2 is indicated above the first note of the right hand.

**Measure 163:** The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. A dynamic marking of *cresc.* (crescendo) is present.

**Measure 164:** The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The left hand continues with eighth notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat.



## 5. Parallel Imperfect Thirds/Sixths<sup>19</sup>

Another motivic element that strongly resonates between these last sonatas is found in Schubert's tendency to begin first movements with extended passages of parallel imperfect consonances: thirds or sixths. This occurs most prominently in the left hand and the inner voice of the right hand as a unison at the beginning of Sonata in A Major in mm. 1–6 (Example 69). As Sonata in A Major itself is a cyclic sonata with the return of the opening theme at the end of the finale, these prominent parallel thirds do return as well at the end of the finale. In the first movement of Sonata in B-flat Major, a passage of parallel sixths appears between the two voices, the soprano and the tenor in mm. 1–7 (Example 70). When the thematic material is repeated in G-flat major in m. 20, this element appears as parallel thirds, yet now with more energized musical elements: moving sixteenth-note broken chords in the accompaniment and the third motive appearing in rhythmically weak positions (mm. 20–23). Mm. 118–127 shows the motive's reappearance in different keys: C minor and F# minor.<sup>20</sup> This moment resembles the beginning of the movement in terms of the texture, but is simpler due to the absence of an inner voice.

Example 69. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 1–6



<sup>19</sup> Brendel calls it “Sequence of thirds,” “Schubert’s Last Sonatas,” 195.

<sup>20</sup> See Example 49 (Chapter 3, p. 55).

Example 70. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 1–23

The musical score is for the first movement of the Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, measures 1–23. It is written for piano and is in B-flat major (two flats) and common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Molto moderato' and the articulation is 'ligato'. The piece begins with a piano (pp) dynamic. The right hand features a series of chords and moving lines, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 19 shows a change in the left hand's texture to a more active sixteenth-note pattern. The score ends at measure 23.

In case of the beginning of Sonata in C Minor's first movement, this thirds motive is disguised in its harmonic progression. Brendel carefully shows the harmonic progression of the

opening theme in Example 71 and argues that the sequence of thirds in Sonata in C Minor is related to that of Sonata in A Major<sup>21</sup> by having the thirds in the inner voices with a pedal tone in outer voices.

Example 71. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 1<sup>st</sup> mov, mm. 1–6, simplified version.<sup>22</sup>



Besides the sequences in the beginning of each first movement of the three sonatas, the rest of the movements in each sonata also have instances of parallel thirds and sixths. They occur most frequently in Sonata in A Major. The second theme of the first movement in mm. 55–58 (Example 72) contains a sequence of thirds in E major in the left hand. When the second theme returns in the recapitulation in mm. 318–321 (Example 73), the sequence of thirds appears with the same notes as those from the beginning of the sonata. In the second movement, mm. 1–8 (Example 74), the sequence of thirds appears again between the melody and the bass, recalling the texture and motive of the first movement's development in Sonata in B-flat Major. This motive of parallel imperfect consonances reappears in the second movement when the theme returns tonic. The last appearance of this motive in Sonata in A Major can be found in the third movement's Trio, mm. 80–83 (Example 75), which contains parallel sixths in the right hand's outer voices.

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<sup>21</sup> Brendel, "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 195.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Example 72. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 53–58



Example 73. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. mm. 314–321



Example 74. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–8



Example 75. Sonata in A Major, D. 959, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. mm. 77–83



By having the same tonality and chordal texture in the right hand, the middle section of Sonata in B-flat Major's second movement in mm. 43–50 (Example 76) resembles the beginning of Sonata in A Major. Schubert reformulates the thirds motive in Sonata in A Major as sixths in the middle section of Sonata in B-flat Major's second movement. However, the beginning of the

movement is unique. Example 78 displays a passage of parallel thirds in mm. 1–8 that eventually transform into a mixed passage of both harmonic thirds and sixths in mm. 9–13, within the span of a single phrase. The melody of the second movement arises in sigh figures with a tranquil left hand ostinato. When the bass changes to its dominant, G#, the two kinds of sequences are combined: the sequence of sixth appears in outer voices and the sequence of thirds in the top two voices.

Example 76. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 41–49

Example 77. Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. mm. 1–15

The musical score for Example 77 is written for piano in 3/4 time, B-flat major, and marked 'Andante sostenuto'. It consists of 15 measures, divided into three systems of five measures each. The right hand (treble clef) plays a sequence of chords, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *cresc.* (crescendo), as well as the instruction *col pedale* (with the pedal). The first system (measures 1–5) begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *col pedale* instruction. The second system (measures 6–10) features a *cresc.* marking. The third system (measures 11–15) includes a *f* (forte) dynamic, a *decrease.* (decrescendo) marking, and a final *pp* dynamic.

The Minuet of Sonata in C Minor in mm. 1–3 emerges with the sequence of thirds between the two hands, which, in terms of texture, anticipates the beginning of Sonata in B-flat Major. In the finale, the development features sequences of thirds. This moment is musically intense, containing with many modulations, syncopated rhythms, and carefully written dynamic markings within a soft dynamic range, as shown in Example 78. The sequence begins in mm. 311–315, and four measures later, it repeats a whole step lower in mm. 319–323. In m. 329, the sequence of thirds again turns into the sequence of sixths and it is repeated again in m. 343.

Example 78. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov, mm. 305–352

The musical score for Example 78, Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, measures 305–352, is presented in a single system. The score is in C minor and 4/4 time. It begins at measure 305 with a piano (pp) dynamic. The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is divided into measures 305, 312, 318, 325, 330, 339, and 346. The score includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking at measure 312, a piano (p) marking at measure 318, a piano (p) marking at measure 325, a piano (p) marking at measure 330, a piano (p) marking at measure 339, and a piano (p) marking at measure 346. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

## 6. A-flat

Remarkably Schubert links all three works with a single note, A-flat, which is also a unifying motive for Sonata in C Minor as discussed in Chapter 2. This specific note, A-flat, appears at crucial moments in the two sonatas besides Sonata in C Minor, which, among the three sonatas, appears most dramatically and frequently. In Sonata in A Major, A-flat plays a much less prominent role than in the other two sonatas (partially because A-flat is an unusual note for a piece in A minor. It does appear, however, enharmonically respelled as G# in the second movement (mm. 107–113) of that sonata, as seen in Example 32 (Chapter 2). Even when the identity of A-flat is partially disguised as G#, other motivic connections radiate from this point. The written out trill on G#, for instance, foreshadows the famous trills in the first movement of Sonata in B-flat Major.

Unlike Sonata in A Major, Sonata in B-flat Major has clearer connections to the A-flat of Sonata in C Minor. Its first appearance is in the first movement's mysterious trill (mm. 8 and 117, the first ending). Yet, unlike Sonata in C Minor, these A-flats do not appear in the musical climax of the entire movement. Instead, these A-flats appear in local climaxes, in intensive musical moments, often with the chromaticism of A-flat creating added musical tension. In the third movement, A-flat returns, now as a key in mm. 21–25. Here, Schubert cycles through the circle of fifth in a series of tonal areas: B-flat major (mm. 1–16), E-flat major (mm. 17–20), A-flat major (mm. 21–25), D-flat major (mm. 29–49), and F#/G-flat minor (m. 50). The key of A-flat major reappears once more in the last movement in m. 46.

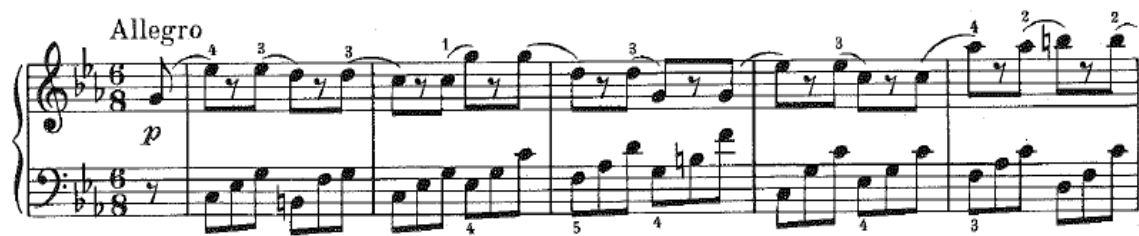


## 7. Rhythmic Motive

In the three works, two distinguished rhythmic patterns can be observed: a sixteenth note followed by two quarter notes (or an eighth note followed by two quarter notes) and dotted rhythms after a sixteenth note upbeat.<sup>23</sup> The first pattern extensively appears in the beginning of the first movements of both Sonata in C Minor and Sonata in A Major, seen in Example 1 and Example 69. Both occurrences strongly state this rhythm in a chordal texture with loud dynamics. A slightly modified version of this pattern is found in the accompanying part of Sonata in B-flat Major's second movement. In this movement, the rhythmic motive is used as an ostinato in the initial A section (mm. 1–42), but, when the A section returns in m. 90, the pattern is replaced with a simpler rhythm without the dotted rhythm.

The most extensive use of dotted rhythm occurs in the last movements of Sonata in C Minor and Sonata in B-flat Major. Examples 79 and 80 show a similarity in rhythm even though their rhythmic patterns and meters are different. For instance, a lilting triplet rhythm (♩ rest ♩) in the last movement of Sonata in C Minor certainly evokes the dotted rhythm which appears in the climax of the B section of Sonata in B-flat Major's last movement.<sup>24</sup>

Example 79. Sonata in C Minor, D. 958, 4<sup>th</sup> mov. mm. 1–5



<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>24</sup> Brendel interestingly points out about the dotted rhythm in Sonata in B-flat Major that its first appearance is in the key of F minor which “mediates between the keys of the two sonatas, B-flat major and C minor,” “Schubert’s Last Sonatas,” 200.

[illegible]

Example 80, continued.

The musical score for Example 80, continued, spans measures 179 to 210. It is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into six systems, each with a treble and bass staff. Measure numbers 179, 184, 190, 197, 204, and 210 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern primarily consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Dynamics include *f* (forte) at measure 179, *pp* (pianissimo) at measure 184, and *decresc.* (decrescendo) at measures 204 and 210. Fingerings (1-5) and articulations (accents, slurs) are indicated throughout. The bass staff often provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes, while the treble staff features more melodic and rhythmic complexity.

Another unifying rhythmic pattern is defined by two quarter-note followed by a half-note (and proportionally identical realizations of this). This rhythmic pattern is prominent in the first

movement of Sonata in A Major, with its first appearance after the descending arpeggios in m. 8 (Example 66). When the opening theme repeats in m. 16, Schubert uses this rhythmic motive in a counter-melody. The motive appears again when the music goes through a series of sequences (mm. 28–35) and returns when a strong statement of a dominant pedal is required (mm. 39–41). In the second theme, the rhythmic motive in both hands states melodic contents in mm. 57–58 and its repetition in mm. 62–63 (Example 72). Schubert even develops this motive as a part of a rhythmic subject in counterpoint in m. 82,<sup>25</sup> so that each of voices in the section presents the rhythmic motive.

In the last movement, the rhythmic motive briefly appears in m. 2 and soon dominates the B section in a metrically shifted form (starting in m. 46). The rhythm appears in both the melodic line and accompaniment throughout this modulatory section. The motive still has a significant role in the development. As the development repeats the opening theme in many different keys, the rhythmic motive continues occurring, sometimes metrically shifted (m. 160–166 and 189–206).

The motive reappears in the left hand of Sonata in B-flat Major's first movement, providing a steady beat in mm. 80–82. This is the moment when the third theme begins in a traditional dominant key (F major). A few measures later, Schubert inverts the counterpoint so that the rhythmic motive appears in the right hand in mm. 86–88. The more obvious rhythmic motive is presented both in the first and second endings (m. 117) as a unison which already has been presented at its corresponding place in the first movement of Sonata in A Major. In the development of Sonata in B-flat Major, the rhythm is now inverted, a half note followed by two eighth notes, and it governs the whole section.

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<sup>25</sup> See Example 27 (Chapter 2, p. 23).

## 8. Others

As all sonatas do, Schubert's last three sonatas have a contrasting key in the first movement. But in his last three sonatas, Schubert converts the contrasting key to the main key of the second movement. Having the contrasting key in the second movement matches with the first movement's tonal plan on a sonata as a whole and increases harmonic tension in the center of the sonata. The key that starts the development of Sonata in C Minor's first movement, A-flat major, becomes the key of the second movement, and C# minor from the development of Sonata in B-flat Major's first movement becomes the key of the second movement. Another considerable common element in the three works is the musical relationship between the first movement and the third movement. In each sonata, the opening of the third movement is a variant of the opening of its first movement; the same key, scale degrees, and motives. In terms of musical structure, the musical motives in each of the third movements are similar to the opening of their first movements. If the third movement is considered as a recapitulation in a large structure, the second movement becomes a development in a large tonal plan of a whole sonata.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

### *An mein Klavier*<sup>1</sup>

Sanftes Klavier,  
Welche Entzückungen schaffest du mir,  
Sanftes Klavier!  
Wenn sich die Schönen  
Tändelnd verwöhnen,  
Weih' ich mich dir,  
Liebes Klavier!

Bin ich allein,  
Hauch' ich dir meine Empfindungen ein,  
Himmlisch und rein.  
Unschuld im Spiele,  
Tugendgefühle,  
Sprechen aus dir,  
Trautes Klavier!

Sing' ich dazu,  
Goldener Flügel, welch' himmlische Ruh'  
Lispelst mir du!  
Tränen der Freude  
Netzen die Saite!  
Silberner Klang  
Trägt den Gesang.

Sanftes Klavier!  
Welche Entzückungen schaffst du in mir,  
Goldnes Klavier!  
Wenn mich im Leben  
Sorgen umschweben;  
Töne du mir,  
Trautes Klavier!

### *To my Piano*

Gentle piano,  
What delights you bring me,  
Gentle piano!  
While the spoilt beauties  
Dally,  
I devote myself to you,  
Dear Piano!

When I am alone  
I whisper my feelings to you,  
Pure and celestial.  
As I play, innocence  
And virtuous sentiments  
Speak from you,  
Beloved piano!

When I sing with you,  
Golden keyboard, what heavenly peace.  
You whisper to me!  
Tears of joy  
Fall upon the strings.  
Silvery tone  
Supports the song.

Gentle piano,  
What delights you awaken within me,  
Golden piano!  
When in this life  
Cares beset me,  
Sing to me,  
Beloved piano!

As evident in *An mein Klavier*, (D. 342),<sup>2</sup> one of Schubert's earlier songs, he had ultimate passion and love for the piano. For Schubert, the piano was a medium to express his emotion, and he devoted himself to writing for the instrument indefatigably from *Fantasy for Piano Duet in G*

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Wigmore, *Schubert: The Complete Song Texts* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 49–50.

<sup>2</sup> Text in German by C.F.D Schubart

Major, D.1 at the age of thirteen to the last piano sonata, D. 960 before his death at the age of thirty-one.<sup>3</sup>

Schubert's last three piano sonatas are unique and yet they belong together.<sup>4</sup> Unlike song writing, which came naturally to him, he had struggled writing in the sonata genre throughout his life, and, as evidence, he left many of his works unfinished in his early years. He never quit writing the genre, but repeatedly tried to find his own voice in it. Eventually, in his last year, he achieved the highest level of writing in the genre in the last three piano sonatas.

Schubert was unquestionably influenced by Beethoven, as is evident in Schubert's biography and in the evolution of his musical style. However, the last three sonatas are very much independent from Beethoven, with the possible exception of the last movement of Sonata in A Major.<sup>5</sup> Schubert's tonal structure is astonishing, yet he employs his creative use of tonal centers to unify the movements within each sonata. Many of his motives are concealed like a riddle but keep the three sonatas tightly connected. He is a more conservative Classical composer than Beethoven in his use of standard movements and forms, and yet Schubert's music is full of lyricism and endless melodies which distinguish him from any other Classical composers.

Schubert was an introverted person and pianist, however, he expressed his feelings and intimate thoughts in his music. He communicates through his music, he tells stories with daring harmonies and keys, and his voice certainly comes out from his beautiful melodies. The last three sonatas indeed represent mature Schubert himself with their own characters, unique harmonies and tonal plans, and cyclic factors. Brendel has suggested that the last three sonatas clearly reflect

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<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Dale, "The Piano Music," in *the Music of Schubert*, ed. Gerald Abraham (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 111. Bardura-Skoda, "The Piano Works of Schubert," 100.

<sup>4</sup> Brendel, "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 213.

<sup>5</sup> Its musical structure follows very closely that of the rondo of Beethoven's Sonata in G Major, Op. 31, No. 1. Philip Radcliffe, *Schubert Piano Sonatas*, BBC Music Guides (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1967), 48, and Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980), 456–458.

Schubert's journey in the last months of his life. He specifically calls each sonata, heroic, death gallop and lure of *Erlkönig* (Sonata in C Minor), daydream (Sonata in A Major), and heaven (Sonata in B-flat Major),<sup>6</sup> successively.

The individual sonatas seem to bear different aspects of musical motives along with their distinctive characters, but in deeper understanding, they are one big cycle. The subtle interconnections between and within each sonata and its movements are not spontaneously written but carefully planned by a master. To express his emotion and its significance, he employs the cyclic elements and makes the work coherent. And as a rhetorical device, the cyclic elements create intensive drama, too. Although Schubert didn't refer to the last three sonatas as a multi-work cycle, the interrelated unifying elements in these sonatas make them a true trilogy.

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<sup>6</sup> Brendel, "Schubert's Last Sonatas," 204.



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